Ms Patricia K. Orr
Select Committee on Assassinations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701
2/11/77

Dear Ms. Orr,

How you tell me that your letter to which I reacted strong on 1/19 was a form letter. It pretended otherwise. For the purposes you now represent a mimeographed form would have been more appropriate and less costly. Must you people be needlessly grandiose in even form letters?

If as your say "We are well aware of your many 3 books and publications on both assassinations" then you should have been well aware that your letter was insulting to me and demeaning to yourself and your committee.

I do not know what you mean by "aware of." It is apparent, however, that you use it loosely, as your committee uses what it misrepresents as fact. If you are "aware" of my "many...publications on both assassinations" other than my books I am not.

In your own words these are the purposes you had in mind writing as a form letter you were careful to pretend was not a form letter:
"I only wanted to open communications with you" and
"as a step to finding the best approach to this particular subject," intended as
"a formal request for a brief overview of your areas or expertise."

Supposedly you know that I alone have spent 13 intensively years exclusively on this subject. I am nearing my 64th birthday and still try to work this intensively despite a health impairment. So to put it one way, where do you get off writing me such a letter for these hidden purposes - why are you so self-important, why could you not say what you now claim to have meant and how could you be on this job as long as you have and still know so little? To put it another way, why could not not consult your files to see if this had already been asked of me, as it had been going back to before the committee was created.

"The best approach to this particular subject" as it was asked of me in the summer of 1975 is incorporated in a hasty and unedited by fairly complete memorandum asked on behalf of Mr. Downing, as it is as of the time of the creation of your committee in the other memoranda. It was the subject of the discussions asked of me by Dick Sprague on 10/10/76 and discussions later in the day with other staff members. It was the purpose of several trips Tiny Hutton and Rock Feeney made here and on the King assassination the reason Jeremy Ahern came here. Your research director is well aware of this from our discussions after he assumed this obligation and from our prior contact. And if as you do not say you intended to limit this to photographs do you not believe that you first should have been familiar with the contents of my book on this aspect and that I might well have been consulted months earlier, prior to the issuance of subpoenas?

There is nothing in your explanation that makes your initial letter less insulting to me or demeaning to you and the committee. You people just do not know what you are doing or how to do anything. On this basis alone you are unworthy of anyone's time.

You now pretend that what I wrote you tells you for the first time that I "refuse to cooperate with the Select Committee." If this is true then I ask what kind of "Special Assistant" you are to the "Chief Counsel and Director" when I wrote him in detail and with explicitness saying I would have nothing to do with you and why. You should have known, so I ask why you write me this way if you did know? Either way it is disgraceful.

For what purposes do you have files? Not to use them?

In your opinion my strong reactions is not justified "If indeed, as in your opinion, the Select Committee has stumbled in the early days of its existence." I do not believe you merely stumbled and I am certain that of this instant what to me is despicable whoring

around will continue. Nothing could be more inappropriate for the Congress on on this subject that is to go to the integrity of our basic institutions. Between you and me this goes back to November 17, when you confirmed that the miserable business of letting yourselves be exploited by Earl Lane led to the public lie that the Memphis records on the King assassination had been destroyed. That any lawyers and any committee could behave as, could lie, could fail to check before going public, is hardly mere "stumbling." And what could be more shameful, more totally self-destructive, than the current public brawling between your chairman and your would-be dictator?

The preconceptions already willed into official fact in your report represent the opposite of investigation and are the opposite on common honesty and decency. That you could do such a thing, if only to sucker the Congress into extending your life and funding you, is much worse than whoring. Whatever you mean by "amuro" you do not understand my work. It is not the quest of whodunits. It is a study of the functioning and malfunctioning of our basic institutions. The Congress is one of these. You have already corrupted this and not only by this phoney, utterly incompetent report that is a monument to deliberate dishonesty.

You have done the same with the press, as in telling the Anderson column that you for the first time turned up what I published years ago, published in facsimile and in verbatim transcript. Remarkably this was after your investigators obtained copies of the book in which these were published and not for any of the longer period of your life prior to their obtaining of these books. Their investigation was not competent enough to find what I later forced out through FOIA action on the same subject, even though others on your staff thereafter obtained copies. They were limited to what they read in a book in your claim to investigatory derring-do. This is fraudulent but it is an accurate measure of your committee to date. It is hardly mere "stumbling" and it's most certainly is not of "the early days" of your committee. Not that ethics and honesty do not come to a committee of the Congress or its members or staff until after on-the-job training.

So write me no artificialities and read me no phoney sermons. I take this subject and its consequences and ramifications much too seriously. And whether from ignorance incompetence or intent, your committee has already taken the course of prior non-investigations the people were deceived into believing were investigations. It is already part of the obfuscation of these terrible crimes that plague the country around and negated a system of society. If it is not easy to go down the middle on this I will at least try.

There is no need to carry this further, as I could, particularly with specifics of unethical conduct and intent and many instances of professional misbehavior. However, I will not ignore the total unresponsiveness of your present parenthetical & "(and even personally malicious)". I was not malicious. I did accurately report what I had heard. You do not make even pro forma denial. And your letters are consistent with the inferences one would draw from such a report if it were accurate.

I do apologize for my typing. It was never good and the position in which I must type makes it worse. It is not merely that I do not have the time to attempt correct it by hand - it is that I do not believe you (singular & plural) are worth that time compared with what else I can do with my time. I respond to assure that a false record does not exist uncontested.

As an older person I remind you of the lament of the biblical maiden whose brothers entrusted unto her the keeping of the vineyards while her own vineyard she did not keep. For myself I had Santayana's wisdom, that one who does not learn from the past is doomed to relive it.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg